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A Reverie
and other poems

ROBERT A. CHESEBROUGH

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A REVERIE
AND OTHER POEMS

✓
ROBERT A. CHESEBROUGH
“



NEW YORK

1889
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Press of J. J. Little & Co.,
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TO
MARION M. CHESEBROUGH
THIS VOLUME
IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED
BY HER
DEVOTED FATHER

TO THE PUBLIC.

I AM well aware that in this practical age, poetry is at a sad discount, and must give way to machinery, the pursuit of wealth, and the hard-headed sciences. At least most poetry must do so, and in accordance with the proverbial modesty of authors, I consent that mine may be classed with the "most." It is unlikely that I shall be much disappointed at the reception my attempt will receive at your hands, as I expect but slight commendation, and concede in advance that your judgment and criticism will be altogether righteous. Nearly everything you will find in this little volume was written when I was quite a young man, was not intended for publication, and probably never would have been published had I not recently submitted "A Reverie" to the judgment of a critical friend, who deemed it worthy of cold type, and in a

moment of weakness I decided to become an author. The rest of the poems were added to fill up with, and I can only hope they will not weary you. If on the contrary (and the world oft-times goes by contraries) you like my style, I may assail you again. Au revoir.

R. A. C.

NEW YORK. *January*, 1889.

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PREFACE.

(*Written in 1864.*)

'TWAS meant not, Reader, that this book should
be

An open page for public scrutiny:

I claim not, that the verse is true or good,

Or that the rhymes, flow smoothly as they should ;

It was not meant, that e'en thy friendly eye

Shouldst scan the lines, or mark where errors lie.

I reckless wrote whate'er you may find here,

To please a whim, and not the critic's ear.

I do not call it poetry, but only rhymes

Wrung from my foolish pen, at various times :

Times when my heart was sad and ill at ease,

Or idle moments ; be it which you please.

My Muse, is not one which I can command

Whene'er I choose, or with a ready hand

Note down, the half-completed shapeless train

Of thought, which swells and surges through my
brain.

For oft-times things of beauty, visions rare,
Have crossed my spirit, midst the thoroughfare
Of business, and the daily scenes of life ;
Then, quickly vanquished been, without a strife.
A merchant cannot well a poet be,
For 'twixt the two there is no sympathy.
A " Jack of all trades " never can excel ;
Of each he something knows, but nothing well.
Bear with me therefore, your compassion lend,
For Sympathy is Approbation's nearest friend ;
But if you will not grant this common need,
Lay down my book, 'tis not for you to read.

A REVERIE.

NOW the hours of light are ending,
And the slowly setting sun,
With the sky its glory blending ;
Signals that the day is done.
Wave on wave, in crimson legions,
Bank on bank of azure light ;
Pathways to the heavenly regions.
Day, coquetting with the night.

Sadness o'er my spirit stealing,
Mingled with a strange delight ;
To my soul a glimpse revealing,
Joyous, painful, sad, yet bright.
Earth before my window fading
Into nothing ; one fixed glance
Chains my fancy, leads me wading
Through a weird delicious trance.

Somber hues are swiftly changing,
Gold and purple strands of light ;
Giant clouds, like armies ranging,
Sweep their glories from my sight.

Twilight coming, slowly, surely,
Turns the crimson vision gray;
Darkness falling fast, securely
Wraps her mantle 'round the day

Now the lamps of heaven, are lighted
By unseen, seraphic hands,
Beacons for the souls benighted ;
Roaming in those trackless strands.
Spirits from the distant heaven,
Never wearied in their flight ;
And perchance, to them is given,
Knowledge hidden from our sight.

Backward down the path of ages,
Runs a train, a countless one,
Of unlearn'd men, and wisest sages ;
Watching with faint hearts, the sun
Sinking in its bed of splendor,
Wond'ring what the mystery meant ;
If the future state should render,
All its meanings, and extent.

Working out in short probation,
Tangled skeins of earth and life ;

Deeds of sin, the pomp of station,
Cruel acts of selfish strife ;
Souls of those who once were mortal,
Sons of toil, and slaves of sin ;
Waiting till the deathly portal,
Yawn'd at last, and drew them in.

For a brief and fleeting hour,
Standing on the shore of Time ;
Till the waves' resistless power,
Sweeps them past the unknown line :
Like a billow of the ocean,
Rising with a crest of foam ;
Grand and beautiful in motion,
Breaks, recedes, and then is gone.

So our lives go, following after
Each the other's even tread ;
Rising, cresting, breaks in laughter,
Foams in rage, and then is dead:
Leaving naught to trace its being,
In the grasping undertow ;
Weary are the eyes at seeing,
Still that everlasting flow.

From the passing cycles, gleanings
 Scraps of knowledge, flakes of gold ;
All the total, nothing seeming
 To the centuries of old.
Arts forgotten, science hurried
 To its doom, but, at its birth ;
Swept away, and quickly buried
 In the all consuming earth.

Delving deeply, later ages
 Raise a mouldy stone to light ;
Aim to read its defaced pages,
 And restore its form aright.
On a pedestal erected,
 In some Louvre perchance is stood ;
There to stare, and be inspected,
 By the gaping multitude.

Science tells of earthly matter,
 Naught is ever wholly lost ;
Though its atoms widely scatter,
 In tumultuous changes tost ;
Somewhere in the vast Creation,
 Will be found each minute grain,

Changed in form, remote in station ;
Still the total bulk, the same.

And the learned sage, will show you
God is only Nature's power,
With a soul he will endow you,
Fleeting as this twilight hour ;
Transient as the meteor's flight,
Shooting past the watcher's eye ;
Flashing with a moment's light,
Buried in a midnight sky.

From the seething cooling masses,
Tells us, comes the finished Earth ;
Rock and metal, by their gases
Point their spectroscopic birth.
And the feeble life beginning,
Teems ere long, thro' all the realm :
That, Evolution always winning,
Upward tends, and guides the helm.

Ever changing, ever rising,
From the monad to the ape ;
Each improving form, revising,
Yields at last the human shape:

And as need demands new uses,
Grafts them on the former kind ;
Striding o'er the worn abuses,
Instinct turns at last, to Mind.

Is that Mind pulsating slowly,
Symbol of an august reign ;
Only yeast, which rises wholly
Thro' a dull gray mass of brain ?
Lighting up the moorland dreary,
With the glimmer of its light ;
Startled by the effort, weary,
Flickers out into the night.

Can the day, the sun forgetting,
Independent radiance claim ?
What the diamond to the setting,
What the lamp is to the flame ;
So the body to the spirit,
Is the shell which holds the pearl ;
Shall Clay, Eternity inherit,
And Spirit, vanish in a whirl ?

Is the value of the casket,
Greater than the gleaming gem ?

Is the perfume of the basket,
Sweeter than the flowers within ?
Shall the body live forever ?
And the soul forever die ?
And shall Matter, ending never;
Gain o'er Mind, the mastery ?

Fool ! the mighty power which made thee,
Lit the spark of life within ;
Is so great, so far beyond thee,
That the mind, can ne'er begin
To grasp the raiment of its grandeur ;
Guess the problem of its birth:
Look ! the stars that 'round me wander,
Mock the littleness of Earth.

Aye ! that priceless Earth ; thy dwelling,
Adds to the whole, an atom more ;
The might of God's Creation swelling,
As counts a sand upon the shore.
What then is thy weak opinion,
Whence this vain and empty pride ?
See ! the driftwood of the ocean,
Goes out with the ebbing tide.

Trust not to the power of reason,
'Twill crumble as a tower of sand ;
Deluding for a transient season,
Faith, alone, yields solid land.

Cling to that with fond endeavor,
Be thy creed whate'er it may ;
Forms and symbols pass forever,
With the coming light of day.
Strip't from man's poor weak invention,
Mighty truth alone shall rise ;
With a glorious ascension,
And illuminate the skies.

Burning out the dross of ages
From the pure refin-ed gold ;
Blotting from the bigot pages,
Hoary lies too long enrolled.
Rive the chains which strongly bound thee,
Sweep the mist from off the land ;
And, as morning breaks around ye,
See, the " Rock of Ages " stand.

Aye ! and it shall stand forever,
Fiercely though the torrents run ;

Is the perfume of the basket,
Sweeter than the flowers within ?
Shall the body live forever ?
And the soul forever die ?
And shall Matter, ending never;
Gain o'er Mind, the mastery ?

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Aye ! and it shall stand forever,
Fiercely though the torrents run ;

Like a wild tumultuous river,
And the clouds obscure the sun ;
Bravely, though the wave breaks o'er it.
It shall rear its crest on high,
Future millions shall adore it :
Man, infallible, shall die.

Priestly rule which led the masses,
In a maze of wildering doubt ;
Blindly blocked the easy passes,
Blew the lights of Science out :
Trod upon the knowledge dawning,
Burnt its heralds at the stake ;
Grieved to see the light of morning,
O'er the Earth, triumphant break.

Ruled the world with rod of iron,
Gave the conscience for mankind ;
To the tiger and the lion,
Flung the independent mind.
Made the law for a Creator,
Steeped in self idolatry :
Truth, the final expiator,
Lives eternal as yon sky.

WHY LOVE IS BLIND.

I N ev'ry age, in ev'ry clime,
Where streamlets stray or bright stars shine,
Have dreamers wrote, and poets sung,
Of Love, the beautiful,—the young.

They paint him as a truant boy,
With wings of light, and face of joy.
With bounding step and voice as clear,
As ever spake in maiden's ear.

With bow and quiver in his hand,
He wandered over ev'ry land,
And shot his darts with careless glee,
Or e'en one thought of sympathy.

Woe to the luckless swain or maid,
Across whose path our "young Love" strayed.
Quick flew the shaft, the deed was done,
Smiles changed to sighs, and peace was gone.

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Quick flew the shaft, the deed was done,
Smiles changed to sighs, and peace was gone.

Now, Jove, who for a good long while,
Had watched the urchin with a smile,
Began to think the time had come,
To put an end to poor Love's fun.

Before the Throne, with downcast eye,
Our hero stood dejectedly ;
The mandate harsh and stern he heard,
Yet Love, he uttered not one word.

His golden bow was in his hand,
And on it lay a wingèd brand ;
Thought Love, " I'll quickly answer you,"
And, quick as thought, the answer flew.

Jove saw the act, and turned aside,
The missile from it's mark flew wide ;
Else, in the realm Love first had been,
The conqueror of gods and men.

Dismayed he stood, and pale with fright,
His ruby lips turned ashen white,
And he who never pity knew,
With tears for mercy dared to sue.

And so, throughout the realm, his name
The watchword of the poor became.
“Harold, mon roi ; à l'aide, à l'aide !”
Was the peasant's constant cry for aid.

Until at last it seemed to ring
Through all the land ; “À l'aide, my king,”
By anguished hearts, raised everywhere,
Became th' oppressed one's daily prayer.

King Harold was ta'en to his long last rest,
In a tide-washed isle—at his own behest :
At dead of night his pall they bore,
Silent and sad to that lonely shore.

The grave was ready, the prayer was said,
The coffin was placed in its lowly bed ;
The mourners gazed on the solemn rite,
When a piercing cry rang thro' the night :

“Harold ! À l'aide, à l'aide, my king,”
And a half wild serf pushed thro' the ring,
Knelt by the open grave at once,
And silently waited the king's response.

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And a half wild serf pushed thro' the ring,
Knelt by the open grave at once,
And silently waited the king's response.

“ Who calls on the king calls not in vain,”
 A voice thro’ the welkin rang again.
 “ State forth thy wrong, what is thy need ?
 Though dead, King Harold will hear thy plead.”

“ My king, this land is mine,” he said,
 “ My all ; I ask but to be paid.”
 “ And shalt be,” spoke King Harold’s son,
 “ For Harold, the King, does wrong to none.”

And there in the night was the silver paid,
 Ere Harold to rest in his grave was laid ;
 Then piled they the earth on his kingly head,
 And left him to sleep in his lowly bed.

PART II.

'Twas night, and round a banquet spread,
Had met the rich and fair ;
Gay was the throng, and at its head
There sat a youthful pair.

For wine and mirth now ruled the hour,
Twixt song and music tost ;
Forgotten, was the mystic power,
The loved one, and the lost.

A fair young face was close to his,
Was bent, his words to hear ;
Lest she, the love he spoke, might miss,
Poured in her listening ear.

Where was the love of yesterday ?
The plighted troth, the vow ?
Oh ! for the truth of manhood, say,
Are they forgotten now ?

The unseen seraph, standing there,
Had seen with glistening eye ;
With saddened heart she watched the pair,
Then turned, and soared on high.

“ Who calls on the king calls not in vain,”
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Oh ! for the truth of manhood, say,
Are they forgotten now ?

The unseen seraph, standing there,
Had seen with glistening eye ;
With saddened heart she watched the pair,
Then turned, and soared on high.

Back to the realms of endless day,
Enough of earthly love ;
How can the things of life repay
For the heavenly joys above ?

The love of man, like fleeting light,
Is changeful as a dream ;
While joys of Heaven flow ever bright,
In an unending stream.

Home, home once more to ruby skies,
Anew her flight she wings ;
Again—once more in Paradise,
Her song of rapture rings.

She tunes her golden harp again,
No more with plaintive moan ;
But holier is the seraph's strain
Which floats towards the throne.

OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN
HEAVEN.

OUR Father in Heaven ! We hallow Thy name :
O'er Earth, as on high, Thou ever dost reign ;
We pray that, to us, Thy peace may be given,
And Thy Will done by men, as by angels in Heaven.
Oh ! give us this day, the bread that we need,
Forgive ev'ry trespass, in word and in deed ;
Teach us to pardon each other, that we
May finally obtain forgiveness of Thee.
Oh ! lead us away from the manifold snares
Which Temptation spreads for us, each day un-
wares ;
Oh ! keep us from evil, of all hues whatever,
And Thine be the Power and Glory forever.

A VISION.

I BEHELD a lofty mountain, lifting to the farthest
sky,

And upon its utmost crest, wreathed in clouds of
brilliancy ;

There, a golden palace stood, builded by immortal
hands ;

And the luster of its glory spread o'er all the dis-
tant lands.

Glowing with a clear effulgence, and a mild and
holy light ;

Thro' the sunshine of the morning, and the black-
ness of the night.

Then I heard faint music swelling, over all the land
and sea ;

E'en to earth's remotest dwelling, bearing sweetest
melody.

All the peoples of the nations, upward bent their
yearning gaze ;

Upward, toward the golden palace, and toward the
devious ways ;

Winding on the lofty mountain, round and round
in various lines,
Paths, and zigzag roads, and thickets scattered o'er
its vast confines ;
And there seemed a countless number, pressing on
with toiling feet ;
Up the painful pathways climbing, o'er the rock and
up the steep ;
There I saw the hardy yeoman, priest and layman,
maidens mild ;
Many a fainting, weary woman, and the mother
with her child.

And it seemed, that all the pathways leading to the
mountain's crest,
Were intricate, and wearisome, with scarce a place
to rest :
While many a broad and noble road with shaded
nooks and trees,
Branched downward from the stony paths, to those
of pleasant ease.
And of the countless multitude, who on the glorious
shrine,
Had fixed their longing eyes at first, with constancy
divine ;

It seemed as though a little band, of ail that host
remained ;
Which neared the mountain's topmost land, the
golden palace gained.

And all the rest of that vast throng, lured by the
love of ease,
Or by some tempting view, which served their way-
ward souls to please ;
Forgetful of the golden shrine, now hidden from
their sight ;
Had missed their way, and wandered o'er the moun-
tain's dizzy height.

Adown some darkling precipice, unwary ones were
hurled ;
While some retraced their steps again, regretful of
the world :
Unheard the glorious melody, which with celestial
air,
Still floated through the canopy, and lingered
everywhere.

And evening came, and twilight had bathed the
mountain's crest,
In a robe of crimson splendor ; and the sun was in
the west

Slowly falling ; yet the warning, all unheeded, on
 them fell ;
As though some evil spirit had o'er them cast its
 spell.
And darkness drew its mantle, and then the gates
 of gold
Were sadly closed, and blackness dropt down its
 sable fold ;
And as the doors shut swinging, passed the Vision
 from my eyes,
And fainter grew the singing, till lost within the
 skies.

MY MAUD, MY MARGUERITE.

MY Maud, my Marguerite !
My little dove ;
So eloquently sweet
And fair. Thy love
Is more to me,
Than life or gain
Can ever be.
Thy gentle name
Fills up my life,
And bids me seek:
My lasting joy in thee,
My Marguerite.

My Maud, my Marguerite !
Upon thy brow,
Sit Truth and Purity
As white as snow.
Thy gentle voice,
That darling little hand:
No maid so fair,
In all the land.

To live for thee,
 This life were sweet ;
My darling Maud,
 My Marguerite.

My Maud, my Marguerite !
 Both joys and pain,
May welcome come,
 If not in vain:
My trust, my hope,
 Are strong in thee,
Nor Time revoke
 Their constancy.
Thy joys all mine,
 And mine thy grief ;
My own dear Maud,
 My Marguerite.

ANYTHING TO BEAT GRANT.

*FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN OF 1872.

“**A**NYTHING to beat Grant,” anything to drag
The hero down who bravely bore aloft the
Union flag,
While patriot souls were fainting, and exultant was
the foe,
While waves of war beat wildly, and drenched the
land in woe,
Who stayed the fiery tempest, with steadfast hand
and heart,
Who rolled the billows back, and tore, the clouds of
gloom apart ?

“Anything to beat Grant,” anything to beat
The victor who would not exult upon the foe’s de-
feat,

* The watchword of the combined Democratic and Liberal
parties.—R. A. C.

But modestly who turned away from Richmond's
fallen pride,
Refused like conquerors of old her bloody streets
to stride.
But gave his promise to the foe, a pledge that war
should cease,
And uttered, "We were brothers once : oh, let us
now have peace."

"Anything to beat Grant," anything to blot
The record of his glowing name, on which there
rests no spot.
To cover up with infamy his glorious career,
Oh! 'tis a noble deed for those who hold their
country dear.
But vain the tongues of malice, for as the years roll
on,
His fame will clearer, brighter grow, like that of
Washington.

"Anything to beat Grant," say, brothers, will you
join
The crew, who would with impious hands Colum-
bia's fame purloin ?

The foe again is in the field ; his battle cries re-
sound,

Come, comrades, to the rescue, for the field is holy
ground,

Raise high aloft our starry flag, and to the millions
tell,

The ballot is our weapon now : oh ! wield it strong
and well.

ALL IS VANITY, SAITH THE
PREACHER.

ALL things are Vanity, earth cannot give
The joys we seek after, and for which we strive ;
The future but promises hope, which proves vain,
And when present it yields us but sorrow and pain.

The silver lined cloud, which soars peaceful above,
And seems a bright Eden of bliss and of love ;
Is a vapory mist, which deceives but the eye,
And losing its outline is lost in the sky.

The love which you sought, and which promised to
 prove
A bliss, which Death only could ever remove ;
Though sweet, is so mingled with sorrow and care,
As to lose the clear halo it first seemed to wear.

The dreams which you dreamt, from your earliest
 days ;
Of successes and triumphs, the golden hued rays
Of a glorious manhood, how have they been met ?
And years creeping on find you dreaming them yet.

The gold which you toiled for, perchance may have
won ;
Does it bring you the joys, you once thought 'twould
have done ;
Is the taste of its splendor as sweet to the lip,
As you dreamed 'twould have been, when you
struggled for it ?

The chalice of bliss, which at last you have gained,
You have tasted the dregs, ere its contents are
drained ;
The roses of youth, they have vanished, have fled,
And shrinking to ashes, lie withered and dead.

The conqueror's wreath, the bright garland of fame,
'Twas to deck thy young brow with a glorious name ;
Oh ! how has it faded, that dream of thy life :
Its heritage, bitterness, mockery, strife.

All things are vanity, Heaven alone
Gives hope of a life, which shall fully atone
For the vain disappointments which follow us here ;
Have faith, for the wealth of the grain is the sere.

A SERENADE.

LADY, from thy bower of love,
Sweetly sleeping night away ;
From thy dreams a moment rest thee,
Listen to my ardent lay.
All on earth is still and quiet,
Cloudless beauty reigns above ;
Silent stars look down upon me,
And the zephyrs whisper love.

Summer nights will not be with us,
Always, sweet ! nor will yon star
Shine as bright as now it shineth,
From its heavenly home afar.
It doth tell me, 'tis the hour,
Love awakes ; then break the chain,
That brings unseen in leaden slumbers,
Dreams of joy, perchance of pain.

Lady wake, the night is waning,
Sunlight o'er the eastern sky,

Soon will spread its radiant brightness,
Hiding night's dark canopy.
And the pale clear moon will sorrow,
Not on thee in peace to shine ;
Friends will claim thee on the morrow,
Let this night be love's and mine.

RETROSPECT.

I TORE a leaf from Memory,
And studied it with care ;
I pondered over bygone years,
Of rapture rich and rare :
Scenes passed away, long, long ago,
Sped swiftly thro' my brain,
And with them brought a mingled sense
Of pleasure and of pain.
The days of innocence and peace,
Of boyish pride and grief,
The dreams of youth, the earliest love,
Were written on that leaf.
A little sunny face looks forth,
Ah ! yes : I see it now,
With laughing eyes it smiles on me.
Above that fair white brow
Her golden hair in wavelets falls,
Like foam upon the sea :
Her gentle voice so sweet and low,
Brings love and peace to me.

Long years have vanished like a dream,
I am a boy once more ;
The quick blood thrills my heart again,
As once it did of yore.
The furrows on my brow are but
An idle fantasy ;
Fool that I was, to dream that death
Had taken her from me.
Oh ! Memory ! Oh ! Mockery !
Thine images are vain,
The weary years of manhood's life
Can need no other pain ;
Enough ! Enough ! I will not look
Too long upon the past,
A gleam of hope at least remains,
The present cannot last.

FOREVER.

FOREVER ! Forever !
Oh ! what can it mean ?
Forever ! Forever !
A sound in a dream :
A stray glimpse of glory,
An instant in sight,
A vain fairy story,
A vision of light.

Forever ! Forever !
To angels alone,
Forever ! Forever !
Its meaning is known :
Humanity hails
The thought with delight ;
But instantly quails
In dismay from the sight.

Forever ! Forever !
Earth cannot tell :

Forever ! Forever !
Through Heaven and Hell
Is eternally ringing
The lost spirit's cry ;
While angels are singing
Its joys in the sky.

THE MAID WITH THE GOLDEN HAIR.

PART I.

AND oh ! there is joy in the house to-night,
From turret and door stream floods of light ;
And hurrying feet are hastening there,
To swell the crowd of the young and the fair.
The old man came with his locks of snow,
His trembling limbs, and his furrowed brow ;
With bounding step came the village maid,
In tasteful robes of white arrayed.
And happiness reigns in the hearts of all,
At the bridal feast in the stately hall ;
For dearly, they loved the wedded pair,
And the bride was the maid with the golden hair.

Amidst the throng, like a spirit bright,
With a blushing cheek, and an eye whose light
Was sweetly dimmed by the pearly tear,
Of joy and peace which lingered there :

She stood, in her robes of spotless white,
Unseen, at her side was an angel bright.
But the feast begins, and the music's note
The silence of the still night broke ;
And louder, and longer, swells the strain,
And the echoes take up the theme again ;
The distant hills repeat the air,
In praise of the maid with the golden hair.

PART II.

And oh ! there is grief in the house to-night,
And the curtains are drawn, and pale and white
Are the faces of those who went and came,
From that sorrowful bed of youthful pain.
With tearful eyes, and whispered tones,
And hearts, which echoed the stifled moans
Of him, who crushed by the bitter woe
Of a wilder grief than they could know.
But the spirit of light is standing near,
And whispers " Come " in the maiden's ear ;
Two angels are leaving the house of despair,
And one is the maid with the golden hair.

Beneath the willows, far out in the night,
With the gale to soothe, and the moon to light ;

And the quiet stars to watch her tomb,
And flowers to over it fade and bloom,
And loved ones to utter her cherished name,
Through years to pass, and come again :
She sleeps in peace, 'neath her marble pall,
Awaiting the blast of the trumpet call,
Which shall open the grave, roll back the stone,
And Christ shall call his loved ones home :
And joy and peace shall evermore there,
Belong to the maid with the golden hair.

ODE TO INNOCENCE.

OH ! Innocence ! Sweet Innocence !
There is no holier charm
Than that which decks thy maiden brow,
And steels thy infant arm.
No golden light, which gilds the sky,
Can clearer, purer shine,
In all its glorious brilliancy,
Sweet Innocence, than thine.

Oh ! Innocence ! Sweet Innocence !
No other joy can give
A tithe of that which they shall know,
Who with thee ever live.
No knowledge of the mighty sage,
Not e'en a kingly throne,
Bestows the peace which thou canst call,
Sweet Innocence, thine own.

Oh ! Innocence, sweet Innocence !
Amid the storms,—alone

Thou art the polar star, to guide
The wanderer to his home.
Whate'er of ill may him betide,
Shall matter naught, if he
Will only cling, with steadfast faith,
Sweet Innocence—to thee.

Oh ! Innocence ! Sweet Innocence !
What diamond of the night,
Or jewel, equals in its wealth
Thy coronet of light ?
Thou art from God, a holy thing
To lead us to that shore,
Where we shall need thy guardian wing,
Sweet Innocence—no more.

TIRED.

OH ! for the eagle's wing to soar away,
From this dull earth of endless agony ;
To leave these daily scenes of strife and pain,
Where hope is crushed, and life itself is vain.
Bright flowers, perchance, thy lonely path may light,
Bright joyous dreams may gild the hours of night ;
But in the rose's bosom dwells a thorn,
And shapes of horror break thy vision ere the morn.
Friends who have clung, and twined around thy heart
When Fortune smiled, will one by one depart,
When clouds of darkness gather o'er the sky,
And leave thee hopeless in thy helpless misery.

Oh ! for the eagle's pinions, swift to trace,
Far in the unknown universe of space ;
From star to star, from world to world to rove,
Where spirits bright, and angels dwell in love.
To wander o'er the golden clouds of light,
To revel in a land of blessed and calm delight :

Where happiness and peace and joy are won,
And aught of life or earth can never come.
Aye ! death were robbed of all its shadowy fear,
The fatal scythe, more welcome as more near :
The spirit yearns to take its first brave flight,
And bid friends, home, and earth a long good night.

TO OUR LITTLE NEIGHBOR
OPPOSITE.

SWEET little Bertha, in her bright blue dress,
A white rose to her heaving bosom prest,
A red one hidden in her glossy hair,
And, in each cheek a dimple round and fair.
Her eyes, which as the evening planets shine,
Or brilliant gems from famed Golconda's mine,
A matchless arm, and rounded hand to suit,
As that which plucked the sweet forbidden fruit.
A form, which sages dreamed of in their lore ;
And such a pretty ankle, but I'll say no more.

GENERAL PHILIP KEARNEY.

KILLED AT THE BATTLE OF BULL'S RUN, AUGUST, 1862.

PEACE to the ashes of the valiant dead :
A hero and a soldier ; Time shall write
His name upon the pillars of the state,
In living letters of eternal light.
Mourn ye not for him ; sleep alone
Dims his bright eye, and stills his warrior breast ;
The great and noble heart can never die,
The soldier's grave, is but the hero's rest.

LOOK FORWARD.

LOOK forward !
Look not back
Along the track
Of withered years :
An aimless strife,
A wasted life,
The hope which never came,
Proves thou hast lived in vain.

Look forward !
Canst thou bring
A single thing
Back from the past ?
Will grief prevail,
Or tears avail
To change what might have been,
To live thy life again ?

Look forward !
Canst thou see
No light for thee ?

No promised land ?
Or dost thou fear
Each future year,
Will echo but the tread,
Of those which now are dead ?

Look forward !
Know'st thou not
The way to blot
A failure out
Is to begin
Thy life again ;
By ceaseless constancy,
Thou must a victor be.

Look upward !
Is earth all
That man can call
His aim or hope ?
Eternity begun
When life is done,
Shall last, when time shall reap
The earth no more ; but sleep.

Look heavenward !
Fix thy gaze
Upon the rays
Of immortality,
Which break the might
Of earth's long night,
And light the golden way
To everlasting day.

TO F. R. C.

MY valued friend, I dedicate to thee
These lines, though thou mayst never see
Or hear them uttered in thy praise.
Yet 'tis not in the power of my poor lays,
To add or to detract from thy clear fame,
Or wreath one laurel for thy honored name.

This verse is not to flatter, 'tis to bear
True witness to a worth which is so rare,
That I have never, midst the ranks of men
Found its superior, and scarce hope again
To meet its equal ; though my walk in life,
Hath brought me much experience of this world's
strife.

As Christian father, husband, earnest friend,
In truest types, thy character doth blend
All these in one, and yet thy modest mien
Lays claim to none ; and only those may deem,
Who know thee well, how much of worth there lies
In thy calm life ; how much of good to prize.

FOR MISS LILLIE'S ALBUM.

TO the beautiful flower whose name you bear,
Miss Lillie, pray what relation are you ?
And when in the winter the flowers are gone,
Pray tell me, Miss Lillie, what do *you* do ?
When all the sweet roses are scattered and fled,
The last rose of summer has always repined,
I don't then understand when the lilies are dead,
Why, unlike the roses, they leave you behind.

THE BATTLE OF PITTSBURG LANDING.

BULLETS were bearing
Death on the breeze,
Cannon was tearing
The old forest trees ;
The sabre's dull clanging
The musketry's hail,
The threads of life hanging,
Like leaves on the gale.
Brave men were falling
Thickly and fast,
On high heaven calling
For mercy at last.
Brother met brother,
Father 'gainst son,
One killing the other,
Rare triumph he won !
Who, who is the victor ?
Go ask of the slain
Whose torn limbs are lying
In heaps on the plain ;

While life blood is welling,
In streams swift and red ;
From the living is swelling
The ranks of the dead.

The battle is over,
The carnage is done,
The dead in the clover,
The victor has gone.
The groan of the dying,
Is stilled to a moan :
The fear of the flying
Has left them alone :
Alone in their sorrow,
Alone on the sod,
No hope of a morrow,
Scant mercy in God.
The woe of a mother,
The wail of a wife,
The last pang is over :
And ebbs the strong life.
Darkness is falling
Down on the slain,
Silence appalling
Is over the plain.

Nought heard but the raven,
Nought left me to tell ;
Save of pity in heaven,
And mocking in hell.

THY HEART SHALL LIVE FOR-
EVER.

THY heart shall live forever, even when
To dust thy body shall have turned again ;
When the gorged earth has swallowed every trace
Left by decay, and purified its place.

Thy heart shall live forever, when thy name,
Oblivious and forgotten, has no place nor fame ;
But break the marble letters on thy tomb,
And fading memory, thy common doom.

Thy heart shall live forever, when shall fall
Of the proud city, palace, dome, and wall ;
When its gay haunts, its marts, are ruins all ;
And stalks the tiger, where stood banquet hall.

Thy heart shall live forever, when in wrath
The elements shall sweep all from their path ;
When the red lava in a fiery torrent pours,
And the fierce glaciers grind its ruined shores.

Thy heart shall live forever, when there reigns
Unbroken silence o'er those moldering remains ;
Aye ! even when the desert sand shall rise,
And choke out every vestige 'neath a burning skies.

Thy heart shall live forever, when shall melt
With fervent heat, the earth, and all which dwelt ;
Lashed by the seething flame, shall groan and break
apace,
And gleaming fragments fly through boundless space.

Thy heart shall live forever, when is made
Another world, in which there is no grave ;
Where toil and death are not the heritage of life ;
Where soul may tranquil dwell, and comes not strife.

Where love forever reigns, and hope grows never dim,
Of pain no consciousness, and banished every sin ;
Where spirit knows no want, and needs no care ;
Thy heart shall live forever, even there.

TO LADY GAY.

DON'T turn, dear Lady Gay,
Those laughing eyes away,
Or quite so firmly say,
You only were in play.
For truly, I believe
You meant not to deceive,
And if you'll not retrieve,
I'll promise not to grieve.
I vow, you ne'er shall see,
The pain 'twill give to me,
Merely a friend to be,
Dear Lady Gay—to thee.

WOOD-FIRE FANCIES.

WITHOUT the wild storm whistles,
And on the frozen street,
There falls a blinding icy cloud,
Of piercing hail and sleet.

The night is dark and wintry,
And downward in its path
The rising gale, with mighty strength,
Sweeps on in fitful wrath.

Beside the blazing fireside,
My easy chair I draw,
Safe from the battling elements,
And listen to their roar.

The wind howls wild with anguish,
Then moans as if in pain ;
Then roars again, as tho' it found
Its supplications vain.

The flames shoot up with sudden glare,
As dying embers fall ;
The shadows flit in ghostly dance
Upon my chamber wall.

How long I sat, I know not,
Gazing, staring, in the fire ;
In a dreamy trance that seemed
As though 'twould never tire.

And the hours still kept striking,
Till I lost them in the night ;
And the fire still kept burning,
With a strangely lurid light.

Wreaths of smoke were upward cresting,
Floating like a misty fog ;
And now and then a face seemed peering
From behind a blackened log.

And from out the glowing embers,
Spirit forms, and phantoms swept ;
Springing from their hot embraces,
As the forked flames upward leapt.

All at once the room seemed peopled,
With a strange and motley crew ;
Of specters unfamiliar,
And shapes I never knew.

They marched in serried compact,
They swam upon the air ;
They wandered round in circles,
And floated everywhere.

Then suddenly they vanished,
And bluer burnt the fire ;
While heavenly music filled the room,
As from an unseen lyre.

And all around me drifted
A misty cloud of light ;
Entrancing all my senses
With a strange yet sweet delight.

Soon in the gauze-like vapor,
A shadowy form there grew ;
Clearer growing every instant,
Till before my raptured view

Stood a female form seraphic,
One of a heavenly race :
Serenity, and wondrous power,
Stamped on a marble face.

Her garments flowing round her,
Like waves of moonlight were ;
Exquisite was the perfume,
Which bathed and filled the air.

A snowy arm extended,
A wand of crystal raised ;
And from its gleaming silver point,
A priceless jewel blazed.

What art thou, wondrous spirit ?
My soul sought to inquire ;
Canst thou be that devouring thing,
The element, called Fire ?

The spring of joy and beauty,
Of heat and light the source ;
Parent alike of death and life,
What, makes thy wondrous force ?

Then—with a start I waken'd,
Which put my dreams to rout ;
And I found as explanation,
That the fire had gone out.

The moon was brightly shining,
The stars shone still on high ;
But in the East, an orange tint
Was lighting up the sky.

Yet, I'll dream that dream again,
On some other winter's night ;
And I'll claim the answer then,
From that spirit form of light.

I will pile the embers on,
To last quite thro' my naps ;
And the secrets which I learn,
I'll tell to you,—perhaps !

MONOTONY.

DAY after day shines forth the golden sun,
Night after night the twinkling stars appear ;
In endless course the seasons go and come,
And winter blights the fields in every year.

The river toward the sea runs swiftly on,
And mingles with its depths with ceaseless tide ;
The ocean rears its cresting waves, upon
Whose bosom sweeps the storm with giant stride.

The earth goes plunging down a trackless space,
The planets in their tireless course have trod ;
And all the stars join in the endless race,
Through the vast universal heaven of God.

And hoary Time looks on, and from his throne
Drops cycles from his hand ; as on the sea
Fall drops of rain ; and these are drawn
To the insatiate bosom of eternity.

Far through the fading visions of the past,
Far down the dim and misty ages gone ;
Grown gray with endless centuries, as vast
As the grand train of ages yet to come.

And what art thou ? Oh, vain and boastful man,
So self-reliant in thy puny might ;
The life which beats in thy weak frame, began
But yesterday ; 'twill take its flight to-night.

Thou lookest o'er the everlasting field ;
'Tis mine, thou say'st ! Oh, poor and vain deceit ;
Thy father and thy father's sire, did yield
'The same delusion, proved it but a cheat.

How thine ? for see the vaunting words, have left
Thy lips a moment, e'er thou turnest pale ;
Of life and field in one short hour bereft,
And rumbling wheels wind up the cypress vale.

And yet the patient field remains, to mock,
And laugh a thousand title deeds to scorn ;
Smiles in the summer sun ; the winter's shock
Outbraves, until the resurrection's morn.

TO FLORENCE.

ALMOST have I forgotten thee,
But the magic of thine art
Still swells with strange velocity
Across my aching heart.
In dreams, at times I've seen thee,
As I knew thee years ago,
And the grief those dreams have brought me,
Thou, of all, canst never know.

'Tis true thou'rt strangely altered,
In face, in form, in mind,
A proud and peerless beauty,
Once—gentle, good and kind.
The world hath been thy study,
Thou hast learned the lesson well,
And the change it hath wrought in thee,
I alone perchance can tell.

What matter? we are passing
To the unknown future fast ;

Leaving memory soon forgotten,
Far in the silent past.
And life grows dark with shadows,
Full of sorrow, pain and gloom ;
For the blighted early roses,
Lie withered on the tomb.

MY OLD FRIENDS.

ONE by one, silently,
Gone to the tomb ;
Following rapidly,
Yet there is room ;
Room for the rest of them
Waiting their turn,
After life's history ;
Food for the worm.

Great though they might have been,
Little they care ;
What the world says of them,
Foul words or fair.
All of the wealth, they had
Gained by long strife ;
Could not insure for them,
More of this life.

Boastful humanity,
Where is thy power ?

Can all that strength of thine
Gain thee an hour?
Will death the destroyer
Wait for thy call?
No : soon must thou follow
After them all.

COMMANDER MAXWELL WOODHULL,
U. S. NAVY.

KILLED AT BALTIMORE, FEBRUARY 19TH, 1863.

WITHIN thy soldier's grave in calm repose,
Oh ! rest thee, noble heart, no voice shall break
Thy long and peaceful sleep ; not friends nor foes
Shall bid thee from thy earthly tomb awake.
Across thy bier, with loving hands we spread
That flag, which was thy earliest, holiest pride ;
Through life, it waved in triumph o'er thy head ;
In death, 'twere well to moulder at thy side.

Upon the heaving deck, thy feet shall stand
No more, as master of the main and sky ;
Thy ship shall sail without thee from the land,
Unmindful where the chieftain's head may lie.
No more, thy manly heart shall dare to brave
The tempest's wrath, the wild waves' tuneful roar ;
Thy voice, once heard amidst the wind and wave,
Is hushed in silent death forevermore.

Sleep on in peace, the race of noble forms
Is nobler, that to theirs is joined thy fame.
The earth has lost thee, and a nation mourns,
Posterity shall cherish up thy name.
A host of heroes, brothers, comrades, friends,
Who fought with thee, who sailed with thee ; at
last
Shall leave to us their works and glorious ends,
And join thy spirit in the crowded past.

EPITAPH.

THERE *lies*, beneath this cold gray stone,
A man who was sincere to none ;
He meant to speak the truth alone,
Which, for his errors may atone.
The good—he always did revere,
Though none may in his acts appear ;
He lived in falsehood year by year ;
At last, in *truth*, he does *lie* here.

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